

CURRENT TOPICS.

Mr. W. D. HOWELLS has taken the "Old Manse" at Concord for the summer.

The empress of Austria, visiting Heidelberg, is attended by a suite of sixty persons.

STANLEY HUNTER, author of the humorous "Spoodenky Papers," is dying of Bright's disease.

CHRISTINE NILSSON has received from King Alfonso a cross of the Order of Beneficence, founded by his mother.

The Rothschild family history is being written by a Paris author upon the request of the English branch of the house.

The Empress Eugenie has written a book upon the various recollections of her life, which will be issued almost immediately.

DR. KOEBERLE, of Strasburg, is said to have received a fee of 500,000 francs from a Spanish prince, whom he professionally attended.

A CLUB-HOUSE to be known as "The Ship," owned and controlled by Paul Boynton, the nautical expert, will soon be opened in New York.

SIR HENRY PONSFORD, private secretary to Queen Victoria, has written a letter authoritatively denying that members of the royal family are believers in Spiritualism.

REPRESENTATIVE HISCOCK, of New York, is going to California for a six weeks' visit, to attend the marriage of his eldest son to a young lady of San Francisco.

GEORGE PEIXOTO, son of the United States consul at Lyons, has contributed a portrait of Cardinal Manning to a Paris art exhibition, which is very highly praised.

QUEEN VICTORIA has a mania for collecting relics of engagements in love. Among others she has mounted in crystal and silver, the musket-ball that ended the career of Nelson.

THE SON of Edwin Corlies, editor of *The Cleveland Leader*, has become insane. The young man is a graduate of Cornell university, and has lately been doing repertorial work for *The Leader*.

M. DE QUATREVALLES stated recently at a meeting of the Academie des Sciences that in Senegambia the inoculation of cattle against pleuro pneumonia and small-pox had been practiced for centuries.

ON his return to this country, Monseigneur D. Conway proposes to take up his residence in Washington, where he was actually proscribed three years before the civil war for preaching radical political sermons.

THOMAS WESTWORTH HIGGINS lives in a curious house near Chichester. The hall is taken from an old family mansion in Portsmouth, and many of the old features of the building are from ancient New England dwellings.

MR. HENRY JAMES has written a letter, in which he says he is grieved that any one should suppose that his Miss Birdseye, the "Bostonians" was a portrait of Miss Peabody, as that lady is one of his oldest and dearest friends.

THE venerable and benevolent banker, W. W. Corcoran, of Washington, has so far recovered his good health as to be able to receive and make social visits, and he is an occasional caller on the ladies at the white house.

THE inhabitants of St. Petersburg consider themselves fortunate in having had an average winter death rate of only 35 per 1,000 of population. In London, where the rate has been recently 19.5, this would be thought epidemic. The usual rate for the Russian capital is 40 to 45.

HERE is a quaint bit of the Carlyle humor which Sir Henry Taylor has treasured up. "It is true," he said, after recounting Cromwell's successes, "they got him out of his grave at the restoration and they stuck his head up over the gate at Tyburn, but not till he had quite done with it."

THE Gen. Gordon memorial fund now reaches \$300,000, most of which has been subscribed by liberals. "The conservatives," says *The London Truth*, "explain in numerous letters to the public prints that they must decline to give anything as long as Mr. Gladstone is on the committee—the humbug!"

MRS. BLAINE has taken the entire charge of her daughter's child since its birth. He is now in short dresses and has overcome the ailments of his first year. Lieut. and Mrs. Coppinger are located at Fort Assiniboine, in Montana, and Mrs. Blaine, while devoting herself to the child, is much worried concerning its parents in the far-away west.

SEVERAL years ago Gen. Grant uttered these earnest words about the bible: "Hold fast to the bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties; write its precepts on your heart, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this book we are indebted for the progress made in the true civilization, and to this we look as our guide in the future."

THE Bulletin of the Association Scientifique reports 4,669 deaths from lightning stroke in France between the years 1855 and 1884. About twice the number were seriously wounded, and five times as many were struck. The hot years were the most fatal. Since 1864 there has been no death from lightning in the department of the Seine.

APRIL.

How soft the rain of April's fearful month
That comes, and gleams of sunshine and
Falling in gracious haste, from out the clouds—
Drifting from roof-tree—pattering down the
eaves.

I sat down at my easement, and look forth
Upon the weeping earth, with full content—
Such gladsome promise doth each raindrop
hold.

Such sure fulfillment hath the sunshine lent.
I close my eyes, and visions fair appear
Of odorous April, blooming in the fields
And pleasant woodland haunts and rippling
brook.

And with such mild evening gently through
The sun emerges from a bank of clouds.
The dewdrops sparkle like the diamond's
rays.

And to the voice of singing birds is heard
Trilling their tuneful phrases, soft and gay;
And I, too, feel the resurrection in time—
The glad awakening from the dead of winter.

—Mary E. Sarge, in *The Current*.

CINDERELLA.

She could not help it, poor little Ceil, though young and light-hearted, the tears would come unbidden and uncontrollable, and as more distant grew each turn of the carriage wheels creaking over the frozen snow, bearing her aunt and her two cousins to the charity hall, a fancy dress affair, more profuse became Ceil's tears, and heart-broken she had left her behind alone with nobody but the servants and Aunt Aphrodite, a cripple, but the only one in the great gray stone mansion who ever thought of her youth and her great longing for a life of enjoyment, but she was by nature sympathetic, and had been young once herself.

As the sound of the carriage wheels was lost amid the tumult of the noisy street, a sob louder than the rest, a sob in which her entire grief seemed to be concentrated, broke from Ceil. Aphrodite, from a deep slumber, and she sat bolt upright in her chair and rubbed her eyes in a dazed sort of way until they fell upon Ceil's bowed forehead. "What's the matter, dear?" said Aunt Aphrodite, "I had such a terrible dream, but it must have been yesterday, but it is too bad." Her voice growing tender and full of sympathy.

"It is all nonsense and selfishness that Maria and the girls want to take you along. You couldn't both desire to marry poor men, and then wonder how they would like to be denied pleasure, and all that money will bring, though goodness knows both are transient enough."

"But, Aunt Aphrodite, I am sure they did not know how much I wanted to go."

"Fiddlers! Ceil, they did know, only they want the best the market affords. You are a young lady, and fancy for a rival, and one provided by their own father's house. But see here, child," she said, as if a sudden idea had struck her. "I bought a ticket just for sweet charity's sake, and if I did not fear the consequences, or if I thought you would like to go, I would say, take it, buy a mask and go and dance to your heart's content. But of course when they unmasked you would be obliged to make your adieu to Cinderella in the fair tale."

Ceil sprang up, all vestige of sobbing dying out of her voice as she clasped her hands together, "go to the charity hall, Aunt Aphrodite," she said excitedly. "Are you really in earnest?"

"Then, please, let me go, I have a little drop of the head and shoulders."

"You are too kind, Aunt Aphrodite," Ceil said. "But it is a fancy dress ball, and I have no costume, not even a garment that would represent a domino, unless it is Uncle Pudding's rain gossamer."

Aunt Aphrodite was silent for a moment. "I didn't think of that," she returned. "But, ah! I have it, give me my cane, dear, and bring a light, and then give me your arm to the door. You shall be made as fair as any maiden who will grace the floor, but you must promise me solemnly, never to tell."

"Aunt Aphrodite," said Ceil, with a suspicious look in her young voice, "have I ever betrayed any of your confidence by either word or look?"

"No my dear, Aunt Aphrodite returned smiling, "this is most especially a profound secret."

"Of course, Aunt Aphrodite," Ceil replied, "conspirators seldom betray each other."

Up the three flight of stairs went Ceil and her aunt to the garret, that great receptacle for antique-looking chests and boxes containing treasures, perhaps, and discarded clothes, rich, but made worthless by the stamp of fashion of past years. Aunt Aphrodite, feeling a sensation of pleasure in the possibility of making a large profit, happy as keenly as did Ceil in the anticipation of the joy in store for her.

"Of course if Maria should ever discover that I had been the means of your attending to the charity hall, I would never cease reproaching you for my folly and accuse me of giving you people deprived of pleasures which in your position are sure to lose some of their charm."

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and abated breath, during the resurrections of those articles which had transformed her into a vision of love. "Do you see the dewdrops lying in the heart of those blossoms?" Aunt Aphrodite said, taking a long spray of white blossoms from among the jewels. "Each dewdrop is a diamond. You must be very careful with them. I should hate to lose one, and this flower is a little loose, but I will fasten it securely in your hair. Here is your fan and wrap and the carriage is waiting to return to you, that is, if the Prince had not found the slipper."

Ceil eloped her small gloved hands together in an ecstasy of bliss as she felt herself being borne away to that scene pictured but feebly in her imaginative mind. What music the creaking of the wheels was to her ears now she too was receding with the sound as they rolled away from the silent house which had half an hour before held her a prisoner.

Had she not sobbed convulsively and thought the world as black as the starless night, and to everyone as unkind, and she would not have been so sure of her fate. Yet now those who were forgotten, and the darkness had given away to light; and if any one had been with you, she had been compensated for all, in the twofold goodness and sympathy of Aunt Aphrodite. So much the world; together are ever woven the sunbeams and shadows of life. So true it is that "each and every thing goes with you, weep and you weep alone."

As the carriage neared the great amusement hall and the cold shivers caused her teeth to chatter uncontrollably, Ceil with almost nerveless fingers slipped the mask over her face, fearing when she stepped from the carriage she might be recognized.

"Would anyone ask her to dance," Ceil questioned herself. Ah! to be sure, if Mr. Pepperton were there he would, for he was the most magnificent, and her dress of extreme loveliness as well as richness, and Mr. Pepperton had a great penchant for costly fabrics. Indeed, he never could see anything in a woman to admire whose clothes were cheap or fashionable. If Professor Meigs was there and he had the least suspicion of her presence he would be sure to seek her as a partner. But then she was not a dancing girl, and she was choosing his partner for a reason other than the floor to dance upon. Then there was Mr. Jack Thurston, who came to see her cousin. After offering that mere friendship would warrant, Ceil did not fear the consequences, or if I thought you would like to go, I would say, take it, buy a mask and go and dance to your heart's content. But of course when they unmasked you would be obliged to make your adieu to Cinderella in the fair tale."

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now as she caught the familiar hoarse wheeze as that lady broke into a sort of jog-trot, quite as unconscious of time-taking as her opposite gentleman was that both of his feet were turned directly inward, as he wove the intricate mazes of the dance.

Ceil's partner regarded her curiously through the slits in his mask, then drew himself up as if offended. Yet she heard him laugh.

She felt her face grow red beneath her disguise. She always had the faculty of offending Mr. Pepperton, and now she vaguely wondered why he did not recognize her, but he failed to do so; and when the dance came to an end, and she lost sight of the Prussian officer, whom she thought no doubt had been in search of a partner whose knowledge of gaily-tinted fabrics was more complete than her own. She again came upon her Uncle Pudding sitting among the spectators with Aunt Maria beside him, who was fanning her heated face vigorously.

Ceil moved away. How angry she would be if she thought if she knew that her young niece whom she had been wont to regard with cold indifference was there not fifty rods away from her and decked in expensive lace and diamonds, and that very face was happy. How could she be so happy? She thought it all over again the band struck up a waltz. She adored waltzing; to her eager, restless feet the quadrille seemed slow and dragging.

Was there no one to ask her to join in the dance? How glad she would be before the hour arrived for her departure.

"There is but one dance following this waltz before unmasking," the Prussian officer said, appearing suddenly. "Do you want to be asked to dance?" "Do you want it? So can I claim you for my partner?"

If this was to be the last waltz before the removal of the masks, he was certainly her last; and even to dance with Mr. Pepperton, she would be unable to sit still. But for a moment Ceil hesitated in uncertainty. The man beside her, smiling for the dance she had been scanning her closely as if endeavoring to penetrate the mystery of her disguise. He would be recognized at the last moment, she thought. She drew back. "Not if you try to discover my identity," Ceil said, a little coldly.

The Prussian officer laughed. "Well, I am not a detective, and I do not intend to discover your identity. I will be content to dance with you, and we will leave the unraveling of the mystery to time."

"Does that always clear up mysteries?" Ceil asked, as they whirled off. "I am not a detective, and I do not intend to discover your identity. I will be content to dance with you, and we will leave the unraveling of the mystery to time."

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curious flower last night upon the ball room floor, and he insists upon believing himself in love with the wearer, and has avowed his intention of marrying that person who can produce another flower like it. He was bent upon seeing Ceil, just as if that child held anything of the kind in her possession. Now, Ceil, she said, turning to her cousin, who had become a trifle pale as she rose from her chair, "remind me of your cousin, I thought I had lost it, and was afraid to tell you," and tears stood in Ceil's bright eyes.

"Ceil, quite regardless of the eyes bent upon her, put out her hand with a cry of pleasure, and took the flower from the apparently astonished Jack. There was an eagerness in her manner that surprised those present.

"It is the same, the very identical one," she cried in an excited voice. "I am sure, I thought that I had lost it, and was afraid to tell you," and tears stood in Ceil's bright eyes.

"Oh, dear, dear," said Aunt Aphrodite. "To think that anything should have happened to these flowers, and my dream is out too; but what a wonderful piece of good fortune it was that it remained intact, in that great crash." A look of anger flashed from Alice's eyes. "How in the world did you come to be holding that flower?"

"The power Jack," she asked with an effort to control her chagrin. Jack laughed. "I always did flatter myself that I was a lucky dog, but this exceeds all my good fortune."

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